

"Miss B. Guile, S. S. *Jupiter*, New York City, N. Y.," and typewritten.

"It is only fair that we should be quits in every particular," she said, with a frank smile.

He bowed. "A letter of introduction," he said, "in the strictest sense of the word. You have already had my card thrust upon you, so everything is quite regular. And now it is only right and proper that I should see what has become of your chairs. Permit me—"

"Really, Miss Guile," interposed her companion. "This is quite irregular. I may say it is unusual. Pray allow me to suggest—"

"I think it is only right that Mr. Schmidt should return good for evil," interrupted the girl gaily. "Please enquire, Mr. Schmidt. No doubt the deck steward will know."

Again the Prince bowed, but this time there was amusement instead of uncertainty in his eyes. It was the first time that any one had ever urged him, even by inference, to "fetch and carry." Moreover, she was extremely cool about it, as one who expects much of young men in serge suits and outing-caps. He found himself wondering what she would say if he were to suddenly announce that he was the Prince of Graustark. The thought tickled his fancy, accounting, no doubt, for the even deeper bow that he gave her.

"They can't be very far away," he observed quite meekly. "Oh, I say, steward! One moment, here." A deck steward approached with alacrity. "What has become of Miss Guile's chair?"

The man touched his cap and beamed joyously upon the fair young lady.

"Ach! See how I have forgot! It is here! The best place on the deck—on any deck. See! Two—side by side,—above the door, away from the draft—see, in the corner, ha ha! Yes! Two side by side. The very best. Miss Guile complains of the draft from the door. I exchange the chairs. See! But I forgot to speak. Yes! See!"

AND, sure enough, there were the chairs of Miss Guile and her companion snugly stowed away in the corner, standing at right angles to the long row that lined the deck, the footrests pointed directly at the chair R. Schmidt had just vacated, not more than a yard and a half away.

"How stupid!" exclaimed Miss Guile. "Thank you, steward. This is much better. So sorry, Mr. Schmidt, to have disturbed you. I abhor drafts, don't you?"

"Not to the extent that I shall move out of this one," he replied gallantly, "now that I've got an undisputed claim to it. I intend to stand up for my rights, Miss Guile, even though you find me at your feet."

"How perfectly love—" began Miss Guile, a gleam of real enthusiasm in her eyes. A sharp, horrified look from her companion served as a check, and she became at once the coolly indifferent creature who expects everything. "Thank you, Mr. Schmidt, for being so nice when we were trying so hard to be horrid."

"But you don't know how nice you are when you are trying to be horrid," he remarked. "Are you not going to sit down, now that we've captured the disappearing chair?"

"No," she said, and he fancied he saw regret in her eyes. "I am going to my room,—if I can find it. No doubt it also is lost. This seems to be a day for misplacing things."

"At any rate, permit me to thank you for discovering me, Miss Guile."

"Oh, I daresay I shall misplace you, too, Mr. Schmidt." She said it so insolently that he flushed as he drew himself up and stepped aside to allow her to pass. For an instant their eyes met, and the sign of the humble was not to be found in the expression of either.

"Even that will be something for me to look forward to, Miss Guile," said he. Far from being vexed, she favored him with a faint smile of—was it wonder or admiration?

Then she moved away, followed by the uneasy lady—who was old enough to be her mother and wasn't.

Robin remained standing for a moment, looking after her, and somehow he felt that his dream was not yet ended. She turned the corner of the deck building and was lost to sight. He sat down, only to rise almost instantly, moved by a livelier curiosity than he ever had felt before. Conscious of a certain feeling of stealth, he scrutinized the cards in the backs of the two chairs. The steward was collecting the discarded steamer-rugs farther down the deck, and the few passengers who occupied chairs, appeared to be snoozing,—all of which he took in with his first appraising glance. "Miss Guile" and "Mrs. Gaston" were the names he read.

"Americans," he mused. "Young lady and chaperone, that's it. A real American beauty! And Blithers loudly boasts that his daughter is the prettiest girl in America! Shades of Venus! Can there be such a thing on earth as a prettier girl than this one? Can



A deck steward approached with alacrity, and beamed upon the fair young lady

nature have performed the impossible? Is America so full of lovely girls that this one must take second place to a daughter of Blithers? I wonder if she knows the imperial Maud. I'll make it a point to inquire."

Moved by a sudden restlessness, he decided that he was in need of exercise. A walk would do him good. The same spirit of restlessness, no doubt, urged him to walk rather rapidly in the direction opposite to that taken by the lovely Miss Guile. After completely circling the deck once he decided that he did not need the exercise after all. His walk had not benefited him in the least. She had gone to her room. He returned to his chair, conscious of having been defeated but without really knowing why or how. As he turned into the dry, snug corner, he came to an abrupt stop and stared. Miss Guile was sitting in her chair, neatly encased in a mummy-like sheath of gray that covered her slim body to the waist.

She was quite alone in her nook, and reading. Evidently the book interested her, for she failed to look up when he clumsily slid into his chair and threw the rug over his legs—dreadfully long, uninteresting legs, he thought, as he stretched them out and found that his feet protruded like a pair of white obelisks.

Naturally he looked seaward, but in his mind's eye he saw her as he had seen her not more than ten minutes before: a slim, tall girl in a smart buff coat, with a limp white hat drawn down over her hair by means of a bright green veil; he had had a glimpse of staunch tan walking-shoes. He found himself wondering how he had missed her in the turn about the deck, and how she could have ensconced herself so snugly during his brief evanescence of the spot. Suddenly it occurred to him that she had returned to the

chair only after discovering that his was vacant. It wasn't a very gratifying conclusion.

An astonishing intrepidity induced him to speak to her after a lapse of five or six minutes, and so surprising was the impulse that he blurted out his question without preamble.

"How did you manage to get back so quickly?" he inquired.

She looked up, and for an instant there was something like alarm in her lovely eyes, as of one caught in the perpetration of a guilty act.

"I beg your pardon," she said, rather indistinctly.

"I was away less than eight minutes," he declared, and she was confronted by the wonderfully frank smile that never failed to work its charm. To his surprise, a shy smile grew in her eyes, and her warm red lips twitched uncertainly. He had expected a cold rebuff. "You must have dropped through the awning."

"Your imagination is superior to that employed by the author of this book," she said, "and that is saying a good deal. Mr.—Mr.—"

"Schmidt," he supplied cheerfully. "May I inquire what book you are reading?"

"You would not be interested. It is by an American."

"I have read a great many American novels," said he stiffly. "My father was an American. Awfully jolly books, most of them."

"I looked you up in the passenger list a moment ago," she said coolly. "Your home is in Vienna. I like Vienna."

He was looking rather intently at the book, now partly lowered. "Isn't that the passenger list you have concealed in the book?" he demanded.

"It is," she replied promptly. "You will pardon a natural curiosity? I wanted to see whether you were from New York."

"May I look at it, please?"

She closed the book. "It isn't necessary. I am from New York."

"By the way, do you happen to know a Miss Blithers,—Maud Blithers?"

Miss Guile frowned reflectively. "Blithers? The name is a familiar one. Maud Blithers? What is she like?"

"She's supposed to be very good-looking. I've never seen her."

"How queer to be asking me if I know her, then. Why do you ask?"

"I've heard so much about her lately. She is the daughter of William Blithers, the great capitalist."

"Oh, I know who he is," she exclaimed. "Perfect roodles of money, hasn't he?"

"Roodles?"

"LOADS, if it means more to you. I forgot that you are a foreigner. He gave that wonderful ball last week for the Prince of—of—Oh, some insignificant little place over in Europe. There are such a lot of queer little duchies and principalities, don't you know; it is quite impossible to tell one from the other. They don't even appear on the maps."

He took it with a perfectly straight face, though secretly annoyed. "It was the talk of the town, that ball. It must have cost roodles of money. Is that right?"

"Yes, but it doesn't sound right when you say it. Naturally one doesn't say roodles in Vienna."

"We say roodles," said he. "I am very fond of them. But to resume: I supposed every one in New York knew Miss Blithers. She's quite the rage, I'm told."

"Indeed? I should think she might be, Mr. Schmidt, with all those lovely millions behind her."

He smiled introspectively. "Yes; and I am told that, in spite of them, she is the prettiest girl in New York."

She appeared to lose interest in the topic. "Oh, indeed?"

"But," he supplemented gracefully, "it isn't true."

"What isn't true?"

"The statement that she is the prettiest girl in New York."

"How can you say that, when you admit you've never seen her?"

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